



TOWN HALL
AHOSKIE, N. C. 27910

976 1976
HD268.A46S86

COASTAL ZONE
INFORMATION CENTER

SUMMARY

of the

AHOSKIE LAND USE PLAN

Prepared by the

CITY COUNCIL
and
CITIZENS

of the Town of Ahoskie
North Carolina

With Assistance from

The Local Planning and
Management Services Section
Department of Natural and
Economic Resources

1976

This report was financed in part by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of North Carolina, and meets the requirements of the North Carolina Coastal Area Management Act of 1974.

HD
268
.A46
S86
1976

HOW DID IT START?

Ahoskie lies in the Coastal Plains of North Carolina. This area is one of the most important regions in the U.S. for food production, future expansion of commerce, industry and recreation. The N.C. Coastal Area Management Act of 1974 asks local governments in 20 North Carolina coastal counties to prepare a blueprint for their future growth and development while providing for the wise use of the State's important natural resources. County and town officials are asked to work closely with you in deciding their goals for planning the best use of land in the future.

This Synopsis is a summary of the *Ahoskie Land Development Plan*. The full plan is available for your review at the Ahoskie Town Hall. The Synopsis was written and is being distributed to every household in Ahoskie in an effort to inform you of the policies that have been made concerning the use of land.

Those who have been involved in this process hope you will contact the Planning Board or Town Hall to discuss any part of the Synopsis that interests you. Your comments and participation in this effort are sought, and have been recognized as the most important ingredients in any process that involves the determination of how land should be used in the future.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

YOU WERE ASKED . . .

The planning process in Ahoskie has been continuous since the mid 1960's. Accomplishments that have been achieved include an adopted local land use and land development plan, a public improvements program, a low income housing development, population and economy analysis, and enforcement of a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and the state building codes. Throughout this process numerous public meetings and hearings have been held and attended by local citizens. Practically every segment and cross section of the Ahoskie population has become active or aware of planning during these past years.

The concept of the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) was, therefore, familiar to Ahoskie residents. Since the Act stresses public participation, the Ahoskie Planning Board made extensive new efforts to acquire citizen input. A survey questionnaire, explaining the land use planning process, was distributed within the town's planning jurisdiction. This was done with the help of the public schools, by publicizing pickup points, and through civic clubs. All segments of the ethnic and social strata were represented in the results, due to the random distribution methods used.

Newspapers, radio and distribution of bulletins and leaflets were other methods employed by the Ahoskie planning officials to inform you of CAMA. Posters and leaflets were displayed at points throughout the county and town along with the questionnaires. The local radio station also assisted by airing public service announcements.

The questionnaire results and past planning meetings have been incorporated into this plan and policy statement by the Planning Board.

YOU SHOWED CONCERN

One aspect of the survey questionnaire was to measure your concerns about the adequacy of public services, land use, and the quality of life in the Ahoskie area. Most respondents expressed a favorable impression of Ahoskie by indicating that they would be reluctant to move to another town. Some, however, expressed specific concerns in certain areas.

Police Protection

Most of the respondents to the questionnaire believe that police protection is adequate; however, a majority are concerned about drugs, indicating that they were a moderate to severe problem.

Economic Development

The survey depicts the Ahoskie citizen to be receptive to the idea and need for industrial development and expanded job opportunities. At the same time, the citizens wish to maintain a high level of environmental quality. For instance, most believe that employment opportunities are inadequate, and that more industry would improve the quality of life; however, they believe a new industry should be required to file an environmental impact statement. Most would pay a higher price for goods if it meant less pollution and do not believe economic development should take precedence over environmental protection.

Land Use

Respondents to the questionnaire encourage a slow growth rate that is subject to minimum design standards and compatible with surrounding land uses.

The majority feel that a person should not be able to do anything he want with his land, regardless of how it affects his neighbors. Ninety-four percent believe that long range planning should be continued in an effort to save something for future generations.

PAST AND PRESENT LAND USE

YOU LOOKED AT THE PAST . . .

Before adopting the following policies, past and present land use trends were taken into consideration. Those that were recognized to be detrimental have been corrected. This is not to say that all future land use problems can be eliminated by correcting past trends. Development problems that were not evident at anytime throughout the history of the county may occur in the future. While reading the following discussions refer to the Existing Land Use Map. This map delineates each type of land use as it occurs in Ahoskie.

A. Residential

Residential land use in Ahoskie has developed in close proximity to the central business district. High density residential development has occurred contiguous to the central business district in the northwest, south, and eastern sections of town. Moderate density residential has developed adjacent to these high density areas in the north, southwest, and southeastern sections of town. Low density residential areas do not exist within the city limits; however, they do occur within the one mile extraterritorial area along all radial highways leading into town. The only exception is the use of land along Jernigan's Swamp Road which is predominantly rural farmland.

Undeveloped land surrounds the town except for specific areas where the corporate limits intersect with the radial highways, such as the public housing project on Jernigan's Swamp Road, and Highway 13 south. It is anticipated that approximately 90 percent of this vacant land will be used for future residential development.

B. Commercial

The commercial areas of Ahoskie have followed a pattern of development recognized in many other towns. The central business district supports a concentration of commercial facilities. Emphasis is on large scale stores and specialized shops serving a regional trading area. A strip commercial area has developed along Memorial Drive on both sides extending from approximately 1800 feet beyond the corporate limits to Peachtree Street. This area contains a variety of commercial uses including highway commercial, neighborhood businesses, and a shopping center. Similar development along Academy Street includes highway commercial and neighborhood businesses; and extends from the hospital in a southwesterly direction 1200 feet beyond the corporate limits.

Highway commercial establishments are located on Academy Street between Church and Main Streets as well as Alton and Baker Streets. A few other isolated highway commercial areas are located throughout the Ahoskie Planning jurisdiction.

C. Industrial

Industrial uses are located along major radial highway and railroad facilities. Major industrial sites have been developed between Highway 13 South and the Seaboard Railroad, along each side of the Seaboard Railroad between Snipes and First Streets, and Maple and Hill Streets. Another is found adjacent to the east side of the railroad between Church Street and Memorial Drive.

D. Government and Institutional

This category includes the Roanoke-Chowan Hospital and other medical services, schools and governmental offices. These land uses are located primarily in the western section of town.

E. Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreation

Land in Ahoskie being used for these particular uses includes all churches and recreation sites. The recreation sites are located along Richard and Snipes Streets in the eastern section of town. A recreation center and building has been developed behind, and adjacent to, the Ahoskie Middle School.

FOR THE FUTURE

Our Numbers Grow

The Town of Ahoskie has grown rapidly since the turn of the century. Its population has increased at a greater pace than any other town in Hertford County. The development of commerce, industry, and transportation have made Ahoskie the center of Hertford County's industrial and commercial life; and one of the chief wholesale points in northeastern North Carolina.

In 1900 the population of Ahoskie was 302, by 1930 it had jumped to 1,940, an increase of 542 percent. From 1930 to 1970 the population more than doubled, bringing the total to 5,105. The citizens of Ahoskie anticipate the population trend to continue, increasing each decade by approximately 15 percent, reaching an estimated 8,500 by the year 2025. The following table represents the desired population for Ahoskie until the year 2025.

DESIRED POPULATION AHOSKIE

1970	1980	1990	2000	2025
5,105	5,850	6,825	7,760	8,500

So Our Facilities Expand

Population characteristics involving size, distribution and trends serve to indicate the need for future public services such as water, sewer, law enforcement, recreation, etc. When these needs are realized far enough in advance, plans can be laid out for location, capacity, and financing of services.

Water Services

Ahoskie's water facilities include five wells, a water distribution system, and 810,000 gallons of storage in two elevated storage tanks and two ground level tanks.

The town should continue to use area ground water for domestic and industrial water usage. Elevated storage should be provided to match the National Association of Fire Underwriters' recommendations. These requirements are 1,215,000 gallons for a population of 5,105. With a projected population of 7,760 persons for the year 2000, a deficit of 405,000 gallons exists. Immediate construction of a new 500,000 gallon tank (scheduled for 1985-90) would fill storage requirements.

Several areas adjacent to the town need water service. As a result of the recent water bond referendum passage, these areas may obtain water during the first phase of construction.

Sewer Services

Many coastal communities are now facing the need for waste treatment plants. Past methods of disposal with septic systems have been shown to be unreliable. The recent figures indicate that 89 percent of the soils in coastal North Carolina are not suitable for septic tanks. In other words, if a septic system is installed in one of these unsuitable areas, it is likely to malfunction within one year.

Ahoskie, however, is fortunate to have advanced beyond this type of treatment already. The town has had a sewage treatment plant since 1963. The plant operates at 1.6 million gallons per day capacity. To date, the peak flow has been registered at 630,000 gallons per day, representing fifty percent operating capacity.

The Town of Ahoskie and an area including the Town of Aulander have been designated as a "Section 201" Facilities Planning Area. It is recommended that the Facilities Plan be initiated as soon as possible and the recommendations of that plan be implemented. The Town of Ahoskie should continue to expand its collection system to adjacent high density areas. Until the final 201 plan is adopted, cost of extending the Ahoskie Sewer Facility cannot be anticipated. Recommendations for financing will be included in the 201 plan.

Transportation Facilities

The most important transportation facility for Ahoskie is the bypass corridor planned by the N.C. Department of Transportation. When completed, it will serve as a vital link between the N.C. 11 southern bypass of Lewiston and Aulander, and the Winton bypass to the north.

The construction of the bypass will lessen the traffic congestion in the city limits of Ahoskie. Highways 13 and 11 carry a large volume of thoroughfare traffic through the urban area of Ahoskie, presenting a safety hazard to all who travel these two highways. The two highways intersect in front of the Roanoke-Chowan Hospital, creating a hazard to emergency vehicles and their patients.

The contribution of the project to the long-term productivity of the area will be major in comparison to its limited short-term adverse effects.

WHERE SHOULD IT GO?

The Land Classification System

The purpose of the land classification system is to encourage coordination and consistency between local land use policies, and those of state and federal governments. Lands have been classified by coastal local governments. The county maps taken together will be the principal policy guide for governmental decisions and activities which affect land uses in the coastal area.

The *Community Classification* designates all lands that have minimum public services and includes clusters of one or more land uses. The zoning districts which will be permitted to develop in this classification include all districts permitted in the Transition Classification except residences on 16,000 square foot lots, and residences and mobile homes on 6,000 square foot lots.

The *Rural Classification* includes all land not included in the Developed, Transition, Community and Conservation classes. The zoning districts that will be allowed to develop in this land classification are the same as those permitted in the Community Classification.

The citizens of Ahoskie did not designate any lands as *Conservation*.

Our Fragile Lands Should Be Protected

Ahoskie is not witnessing many of the problems of other coastal communities due to the town's distance from the beaches and sounds, and its landlocked characteristics. As a result, the town has only one potential environmentally fragile area (Area of Environmental Concern) within its jurisdiction. This is the Ahoskie Creek, which is included in the Public Trust Waters category as defined by the Coastal Resources Commission.

The areas that fall within this definition are presently being studied by the Coastal Resources Commission and local government. From this investigation standards will be set for the types of development permitted in the Areas of Environmental Concern. Your views are needed. You will be given an opportunity to express them at a public hearing held in Hertford County.

Public Trust Waters

A. Description: All waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the lands thereunder; all navigable natural bodies of water and lands thereunder except privately owned lakes to which the public has no right of access; all waters in artificially created bodies of water in which exist significant public fishing resources or other public resources which are accessible to the public by navigation; all waters in artificially created bodies of water in which the public has acquired rights of prescription, custom, usage, dedication or any other means.

B. Significance: The public has rights in these water including navigation and recreation. In addition, these waters support valuable commercial and sports fisheries, have aesthetic value, and are important potential resources for economic development.

C. Appropriate Uses: Any land use which interferes with the public right of navigation, or other public trust rights, which the public may be found to have in these waters, shall not be allowed. The development of navigational channels, drainage ditches, the use of bulkheads to prevent erosion, and the building of piers or wharfs are examples of land uses appropriate within public trust waters; provided that such land uses will not be detrimental to the biological and physical functions and public trust rights. Projects which would directly or indirectly block or impair existing navigation channels, increase shoreline erosion, deposit spoils below mean high tide, cause adverse water circulation patterns, violate water quality standards, or cause degradation of shellfish waters are generally considered incompatible with the management of public trust waters.

D. Applicability to Ahoskie: Public trust waters in Ahoskie include Ahoskie Creek.

investment in land. For example, state and local agencies can anticipate the need for early acquisition of lands and easements in the transition class for schools, recreation, transportation and other public facilities.

The system can also provide a useful framework for budgeting and planning for the construction of community facilities such as water and sewer systems, schools, and roads. The resources of many state and federal agencies, as well as those of the local government which are used for such facilities, can then be more efficiently allocated.

In addition, such a system will aid in better coordination of regulatory policies and decisions. Conservation and rural production lands will help to focus the attention of state and local agencies and interests concerned with the valuable natural resources of the state. On the other hand, lands in the Transition and Community classes will be of special concern to those agencies, and interests who work for high quality development through local land use controls such as zoning and subdivision regulations.

Finally, the system can help to provide guidance for a more equitable distribution of the land tax burden. Private lands which are in the Rural and Conservation classes should have low taxes to reflect the policy that few, if any, public services will be provided to these lands. In contrast, lands in the Transition Class should be taxed to pay for the large cost of new public services which will be required to support the density of growth anticipated.

The North Carolina Land Classification System contains five classes of land which are illustrated on the Land Classification Map enclosed in this report. These five classes are:

WHAT STANDARDS SHOULD BE SET?

A policy statement, to be used as a guide for future land use decisions, was adopted as a result of the in-depth study of the past, present, and projected land use. It calls for the continuance of the town's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and a Building Code. The application of each of these ordinances to the five land classifications determined by the Coastal Resources Commission are as follows.

Reference should be made to the Land Classification Map as you read the following goal statement:

The *Developed* classification designates all land that has access to both public water and sewer and 2,000 people per square mile. In areas of Ahoskie so designated, all of the ordinances and codes will continue to be enforced. All zoning districts listed in the Ahoskie Zoning Ordinance will be permitted to develop.

The *Transition* classification designates all land that has 2,000 population per square mile and no public water and sewer, or land that has public water and sewer but does not have 2,000 people per square mile.

The size of the residential lots that develop in this area will depend on the zoning district and the availability of water and sewer systems approved by the N.C. Division of Health Services. Lots with no connections to an approved water and sewer system will be a minimum of 20,000 square feet. Lots connected to an approved public water system will be a minimum of 15,000 square feet. Depending on the zoning, residential structures can be located on 10,000 or 6,000 square foot lots if connections are made to an approved public water and sewer system. Office and institutional areas, shopping centers, highway commercial businesses, light industrial uses and heavy industrial uses will develop in this area according to local zoning and the availability of utilities.

recommended policies of land use and land classification. The plan only serves as a beginning point—to identify trends and ways of minimizing problems associated with those trends. Only through implementation, the subsequent stage involving regulation enforcement, may growth be guided to areas suitable for development. Ahoskie is presently enforcing many of the regulations necessary to achieve implementation. Various town codes and ordinances require minimum standards of design, lot size, facilities, etc. These include the Ahoskie Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and Building Code.

The Town Council has also been active in other programs to improve and protect the Ahoskie lifestyle. A downtown revitalization study is presently being conducted in an effort to reveal methods of improving the downtown shopping area in appearance and customer appeal.

A county water bond referendum was recently approved by county voters. During first phase construction, public water lines will be extended to each highway (except S.R. 1101) leading into Ahoskie. These lines will help to serve the rapidly growing residential areas on the outskirts of town.

The Town of Ahoskie and Hertford County are working closely to improve the economic base of the local governing units. Hertford County has appointed an Industrial Development Commission consisting of persons from all parts of the county. The purpose of the Commission is to seek industrial prospects expressing interest in locating in the county.

The Cooperation Between City/County

The following statement from the Hertford County Land Development Plan Synopsis also applies to Ahoskie:

"According to the Coastal Area Management Act, each incorporated municipal government within each coastal county was given the option of doing their own Land Development Plan or relinquishing this task to the county. Each town in Hertford County was given the opportunity to respond. Ahoskie was the only town requesting to do their plan locally.

There were several methods employed by the county and towns to assure that goals, policies, and land classification would not be conflicting. A questionnaire was distributed to all parts of the county, to citizens within each city jurisdiction, as well as to those in the rural, unincorporated areas. A joint town and county public hearing was held in an effort to coordinate all aspects of the planning process. The same planning consultant was employed by the county and towns to serve as a liaison between the two. This prevented conflicts that would normally occur due to a lack of communication when two or more consultants are involved."

As you reviewed the Land Classification Map, you noticed how each classification flowed from the town's jurisdiction in compliance with the classification definitions.

YOU DID IT

The Town of Ahoskie had already begun planning for their future growth when the Coastal Area Management Act was passed in 1974. Many ordinances and regulations, now being recommended to other coastal communities, had been enacted. The Town Council, however, saw the opportunity that the Act presented for a more extensive planning effort. Thus, they chose to formulate their own plan. You were surveyed to discover your concerns. Then, goals and objectives, policies and standards were drawn up to meet these concerns. This land use plan is the result. However, it is not the ending.

As Ahoskie grows and new programs are implemented, a new set of data will be developed. The new information will then be applied to this plan, reviewing and updating any sections necessary. Planning is a day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year process that involves all members of the community. Your participation has been appreciated, and it is hoped that it will continue in the future.